



For more information, contact:

Al Setka  
Director of Communications  
Great Ape Trust of Iowa  
515.243.3580  
515.720.7430 (mobile)  
[asetka@greatapetrust.org](mailto:asetka@greatapetrust.org)

**Great Ape Trust gathers internationally  
recognized scientists for *Decade of the Mind III*  
*With emphasis on great apes, scientists will  
explore how the brain creates a mind***

Des Moines, Iowa – March 27, 2008 – Internationally recognized research pioneers from a variety of disciplines will gather in Des Moines May 7-9 when Great Ape Trust of Iowa presents ***Decade of the Mind III: Emergence of the Mind***, a groundbreaking symposium exploring the topics of consciousness and mind in nonhuman primates, with an emphasis on great apes.

The topics to be discussed in nine plenary sessions complement Great Ape Trust's cognitive and behavioral research with nonhuman primates to better understand how a brain creates a mind, according to [Dr. Rob Shumaker](#), co-organizer of the event and director of orangutan research at Great Ape Trust.

“Cognitive and behavioral research with nonhuman primates clearly demonstrates that many aspects of the mind assumed to be uniquely human are shared with humans’ closest living relatives,” said [Dr. Karyl Swartz](#), also a co-organizer of the symposium and a scientist at Great Ape Trust. “Presently, the most relevant questions concerning these aspects of the mind may not be whether they are uniquely human; rather the questions to be answered revolve around the degree to which these cognitive skills are

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shared among human and nonhuman primates and by what mechanisms they emerge and develop. This provides a rich perspective for exploring how a brain creates a mind.”

[Dr. Giulio Tononi](#), a professor of psychiatry at University of Wisconsin-Madison and a pioneer in studies of the neural basis of consciousness and the function of sleep, will give the keynote address, “Consciousness and the Brain,” at the three-day symposium, the third in the Decade of the Mind series. Tononi’s breakthrough research includes a finding that the fading of consciousness during dreamless sleep seems to occur as the different regions of the cerebral cortex that mediate perception, thought and action become functionally disconnected.

Tononi will make his remarks on the opening night of the symposium at the Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave., where all sessions will be held. A tour of Great Ape Trust facilities, followed by a reception and casual dinner, are also scheduled.

Other speakers are:

- [Dr. James Olds](#), director of the Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. The Krasnow Institute, one of Great Ape Trust’s scientific partners, presented the first *Decade of the Mind* symposium last year as part of its mission to expand understanding of mind, brain and intelligence with research conducted at the intersection of the separate fields of cognitive psychology, neurobiology, and the computer-driven study of artificial intelligence and complex adaptive systems. Olds’ session is titled “Decade of the Mind: The Spirit of Vannevar Bush.” Bush was an American engineer, inventor and politician who pioneered many of the concepts that later inspired the creation of hypertext and the World Wide Web.

- [Dr. Roger K.R. Thompson](#), the Dr. E. Paul and Frances H. Reiff Professor in the Department of Psychology at Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa. Thompson, whose session is titled “A Natural History of the Mind,” has studied sensory and memory processes in bottle-nosed dolphins, and focuses on researching and teaching comparative analysis of cognition with chimpanzees, old- and new-world monkeys, human infants and birds.

- [Dr. Colin Allen](#), a professor in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Indiana University in Bloomington. Allen has broad research interests in the philosophy of biology and cognitive science, but is best-known for his work on animal

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behavior and cognition. His session is titled “How Hard is the Science of Animal Minds?”

- [Dr. Kathy Schick](#) and [Dr. Nicholas Toth](#), co-directors of the Stone Age Institute, an autonomous research facility with strong ties to Indiana University in Bloomington, co-directors of the Center for Research into the Anthropological Foundations of Technology, or CRAFT, and co-directors of the Human Evolutionary Studies Program. Experimental archaeologists, Schick and Toth focus their investigations on stone tool-making and tool-using behaviors of modern African apes and on the manufacture and use of early Paleolithic tools. Their session is titled “The Human Mind Evolving.”

- [Dr. Anne Russon](#), a professor of psychology at Glendon College of York University, Toronto, Canada. Russon has been studying intelligence and learning in ex-captive Bornean orangutans rehabilitated and released to forest life since 1989 and is widely published on the subject of ape intelligence, and orangutan intelligence in particular. Her session is titled “The Evolution of Thought: Evolutionary Origins of Great Ape Intelligence.”

- [Dr. Tetsuro Matsuzawa](#), a professor in the Language and Intelligence Section at the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University in Japan. Matsuzawa’s research has focused on chimpanzee intelligence and tool use, both in the wild and in laboratory settings. His session is titled “Chimpanzee Mind: A Combining Effort of Fieldwork and Laboratory Work.”

- [Dr. Robert Seyfarth](#), a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Seyfarth began his research with vervet monkeys in Kenya, and since 1992 has been involved in a study of communication, cognition and behavior among baboons in the Moremi Game Reserve, Bostwana. His session is titled “Baboon Metaphysics: The Evolution of a Social Mind.”

- [Dr. Merlin Donald](#), professor *emeritus* in the Department of Psychology at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Donald is the author of two influential books: *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition* and *A Mind so Rare: The Evolution of Human Consciousness*. He continues to focus academically on human cognitive evolution, especially on the complex interactions between mind, technology and culture.

The Decade of the Mind initiative follows the model established with Decade of the

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Brain, 1990-2000. During that period, quantum leaps in neuroscience spurred development of new technologies that gave researchers the tools to look non-invasively into the living, conscious brain and develop a blueprint of its structure.

The Decade of the Mind initiatives take this scientific inquiry further, providing greater understanding of how a brain creates a mind and how the mind thinks and acts. Such an understanding addresses vital U.S. interests, including but not limited to science, medicine, economic growth, security and well-being.

## ***GREAT APE TRUST BACKGROUND***

Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a scientific research facility in southeast Des Moines dedicated to understanding the origins and future of culture, language, tools and intelligence. When completed, Great Ape Trust will be the largest great ape facility in North America and one of the first worldwide to include all four types of great ape – bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans – for noninvasive interdisciplinary studies of their cognitive and communicative capabilities.

Great Ape Trust is dedicated to providing sanctuary and an honorable life for great apes, studying the intelligence of great apes, advancing conservation of great apes and providing unique educational experiences about great apes. Great Ape Trust of Iowa is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization and is certified by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). To learn more about Great Ape Trust of Iowa, go to [www.GreatApeTrust.org](http://www.GreatApeTrust.org).

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Insights Through Collaborations with Apes